

EXTRATERRESTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

**Something
is out
there
on
Mars
and its
moons!**

Extracted and edited from the book

Extraterrestrial Archaeology

by David Hatcher Childress

© 1994 Adventures Unlimited

"At most, terrestrial men fancied that there might be other men upon Mars, perhaps inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise."

—H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*

PHOBOS: MALFUNCTION OR EARLY "STAR WARS" INCIDENT?

Phobos, one of two moons of Mars, has itself always been considered a rather mysterious object, as has its smaller twin, Deimos. Josef Shklovskii, noted member of the Soviet Academy of Science and co-writer with Dr Carl Sagan of *Intelligent Life in the Universe*, once calculated from the estimated density of the Martian atmosphere and the peculiar 'acceleration' of Phobos, that the satellite must be hollow. Could Phobos be a hollowed-out space station of huge proportions?

In July 1988, the Russians launched two unmanned satellite probes—*Phobos 1* and *Phobos 2*—in the direction of Mars, with the primary intention of investigating the planet's mysterious moon, Phobos. *Phobos 1* was unfortunately lost en route two months later, reportedly because of a radio command error. *Phobos 2* was also ultimately lost in most intriguing circumstances, but not before it had beamed back certain images and information from the planet Mars itself.

Phobos 2 arrived safely at Mars in January 1989 and entered into orbit around Mars as the first step at its destination toward its ultimate goal: to transfer to an orbit that would make it fly almost in tandem with the Martian moonlet called Phobos (hence the spacecraft's name) and explore the moonlet with highly sophisticated equipment that included two packages of instruments to be placed on the moonlet's surface.

All went well until *Phobos 2* aligned itself with Phobos, the Martian moonlet. Then, on 28th March 1989, the Soviet mission control centre acknowledged sudden communication "problems" with the spacecraft; and Tass, the official Soviet news agency, reported that "*Phobos 2* failed to communicate with Earth as scheduled after completing an operation yesterday around the Martian moon Phobos. Scientists at mission control have been unable to establish stable radio contact."

What had caused the *Phobos 2* spacecraft to be lost? The answer came about three months later. Pressed by their international participants in the *Phobos* missions to provide more definitive data, the Soviet authorities released the taped television transmission *Phobos 2* sent in its last moments except for the last frames, taken just seconds before the spacecraft fell silent. The television clip was shown by some TV stations in Europe and Canada as part of weekly 'diary' programs, as a curiosity and not as a hot news item.

The television sequence thus released focused on two anomalies. The first was a network of straight lines in the area of the Martian equator; some of the lines were short, some longer, some thin, some wide enough to look like rectangular shapes 'embossed' in the Martian surface. Arranged in rows parallel to each other, the pattern covered an area of some six hundred square kilometers (more than two hundred and thirty square miles). The 'anomaly' appeared to be far from a natural phenomenon.

The television clip was accompanied by a live comment by Dr John Becklake of the London Science Museum. He described the phenomenon as very puzzling, because the pattern seen on the surface of Mars was photographed not with the spacecraft's optical camera but with its infrared camera—a camera that takes pictures of objects using the heat they radiate, and not by the play of light and shadow on them. In other words, the pattern

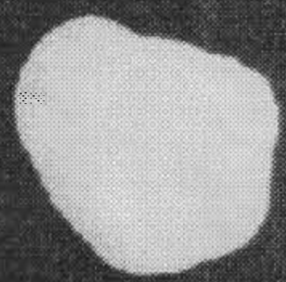
ФОБОС - ВСК ФРЕГАТ

СССР
ГДР
НПС

25.03.1988 г.

КАНАЛ 03
КАНАЛ 03
ВРЕМЯ 14.57.17.926
ЭКСПОЗ. 0008

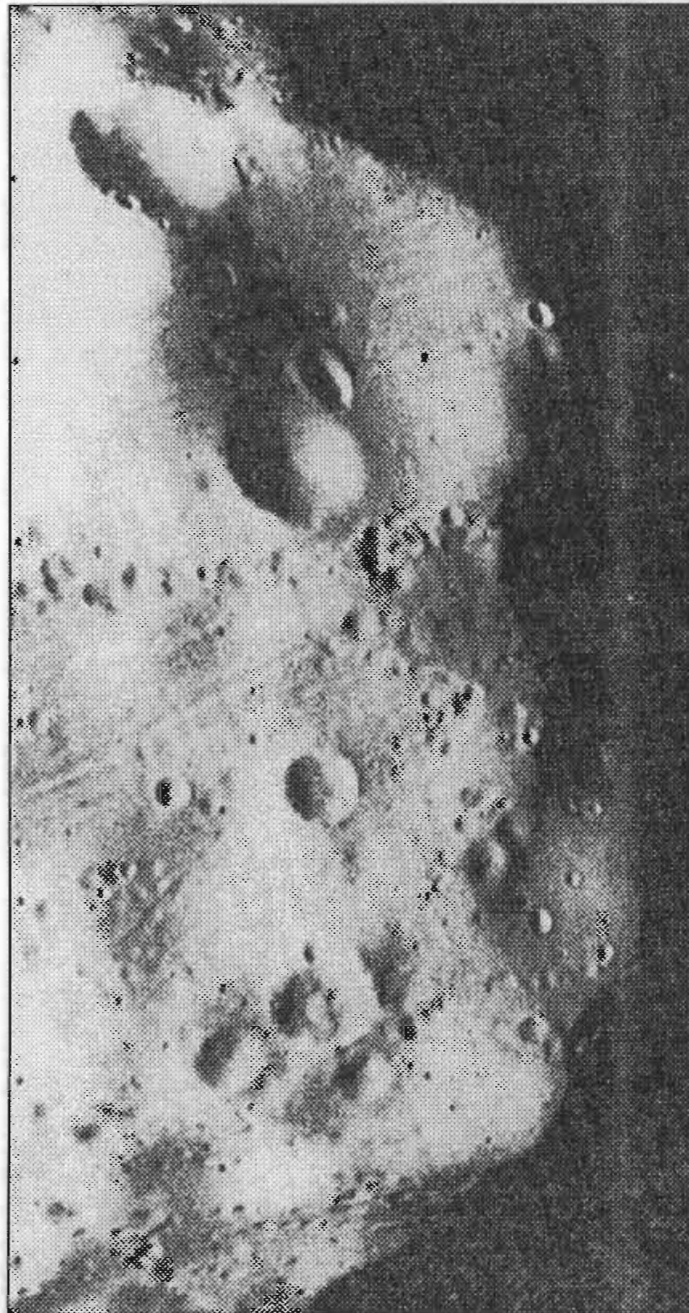
КАДР 03
ДУТКИ 0255



The Last Photo of Phobos. This is the photo given by Dr Marina Popovich as the final transmission of the Russian probe *Phobos 2* before it was 'shot out of orbit'. The photo apparently shows the Martian moon Phobos with a long cigar-shaped craft either coming from or going to the moon.

of parallel lines and rectangles covering an area of almost two hundred and fifty square miles was a source of heat radiation. It is highly unlikely that a natural source of heat radiation (a geyser or a concentration of radioactive minerals under the surface, for example) would create such a perfect geometric pattern. When viewed over and over again, the pattern definitely looks artificial; but as for what it was, the scientist said, "I certainly don't know."

According to Boris Bolitsky, science correspondent for *Radio Moscow*, just before contact was lost with *Phobos 2*, several unusual images were radioed back to Earth, described by the Russian as "quite remarkable features". A report taken from *New Scientist* of 8 April 1989, describes the following: "The features are either on the Martian surface or in the lower atmosphere. The features are between 20 and 25 kilometers wide and do not resemble any known geological formation. They are spindle-shaped and are proving to be intriguing and puzzling."



Close-up view of Phobos, showing the grooved and cratered surface. *Viking Orbiter* photo 39B84.

According to Boris Bolitsky, science correspondent for *Radio Moscow*, just before contact was lost with *Phobos 2*, several unusual images were radioed back to Earth, described by the Russian as "quite remarkable features".

Since no coordinates for the precise location of this 'anomalous feature' have been released publicly, it is impossible to judge its relationship to another puzzling feature on the surface of Mars that can be seen in *Mariner 9* frame 4209-75. It is also located in the equatorial area (at longitude 186.4) and has been described as "unusual indentations with radial arms protruding from a central hub", caused (according to NASA scientists) by the melting and collapse of permafrost layers. The design of the features, bringing to mind the structure of a modern airport with a circular hub from which the long structures housing the airplane gates radiate, can be better visualised when the photograph is reversed (showing depressions as protrusions).

A SHADOW ACROSS THE SURFACE OF MARS

An unusual photo of a thin shadow across Mars was shown on the Russian television segment. Seen on the surface of Mars was a clearly defined dark shape that could indeed be described, as it was in the initial dispatch from Moscow, as a "thin ellipse" (this photo is a still from the Soviet television clip). It was certainly different from the shadow of Phobos recorded eighteen years earlier by *Mariner 9*. The latter cast a shadow that was a rounded ellipse and fuzzy at the edges, as would be cast by the uneven surface of the moonlet. The 'anomaly' seen in the *Phobos 2* transmission was a thin ellipse with very sharp rather than rounded points (the shape is known in the diamond trade as a "marquise") and the edges, rather than being fuzzy, stood out sharply against a kind of halo on the Martian surface. Dr Becklake described it as "something that is between the spacecraft and Mars, because we can see the Martian surface below it," and stressed that the object was seen both by the optical and the infrared (heat-seeking) camera.

All these reasons explain why the Soviets have not suggested that the dark, "thin ellipse" might have been the shadow of the moonlet.

While the image was held on the screen, Dr Becklake explained that it was taken as the spacecraft was aligning itself with Phobos (the moonlet). "As the last picture was halfway through," he said, "they [Soviets] saw something which should not be there." The Soviets, he went on to state, "have not yet released this last picture, and we won't speculate on what it shows."

So what was it that collided or crashed into *Phobos 2*? Was the space probe shot out of space for 'seeing too much'? What does the last secret frame show? In his careful words to *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, the chairman of the Soviet equivalent of NASA, referred to that last frame, saying, "One image appears to include an odd-shaped object between the spacecraft and Mars."

This 'highly secret' photo was later given to the Western press by Colonel Dr Marina Popovich, a Russian astronaut and pilot who has long been interested in UFOs. At a UFO conference in 1991, Popovich gave to certain investigators some interesting

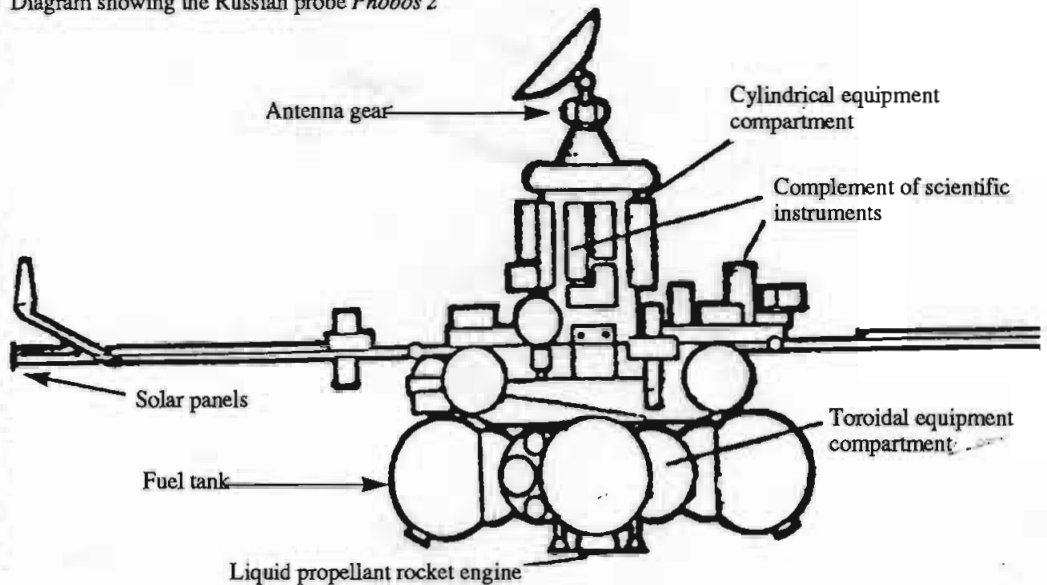
information that she 'smuggled' out of the now ex-Soviet Union. Part of the information was what has been called "the first ever leaked account of an alien mothership in the solar system".

The last transmission from *Phobos 2* was a photograph of a gigantic cylindrical spaceship—a huge, approx. 20 km long, 1.5 km diameter cigar-shaped 'mothership', that was photographed on 25th March 1989 hanging or parked next to the Martian moon Phobos by the Soviet unmanned sonde *Phobos 2*. After that last frame was radio-transmitted back to Earth, the probe mysteriously disappeared; according to the Russians it was destroyed—possibly knocked out with an energy pulse beam.

The cigar-shaped craft in the penultimate frame taken by *Phobos 2* is apparently the object casting the oblong shadow on the surface of Mars in the earlier photo.

Australian science writer Brian Crowley says that because of the convex catseye shadow—which, because the overhead solar inclination prevented shadow-casting by Martian surface features, implies a shadow thrown on the surface by something in orbit—beyond the orbit of *Phobos 2* itself. The shadow—spindle- or cigar-shaped—is inconsistent with any possible shadow cast by the moon Phobos, which is an irregular potato shape. One needs little imagination to postulate a giant, hovering cigar-shaped mother craft similar to those documented down the years by UFO investigators.

Diagram showing the Russian probe *Phobos 2*



INFRARED PHOTOS OF AN UNDERGROUND CITY?

Another *Phobos* picture, released on Canadian TV, presents an infrared scan radiometer image of the Martian surface that showed clearly defined rectangular areas. These were interconnected with a latticework of perfectly straight channels, much resembling a city block. There were no corresponding surface features taken by regular cameras. This suggests the heat signature of what may be a set of underground caverns and channels that are just too geometrically regular to be formed naturally. According to Dr John Becklake of the London Science Museum, "The city-like pattern is 60 kilometers wide and could easily be mistaken for an aerial view of Los Angeles."



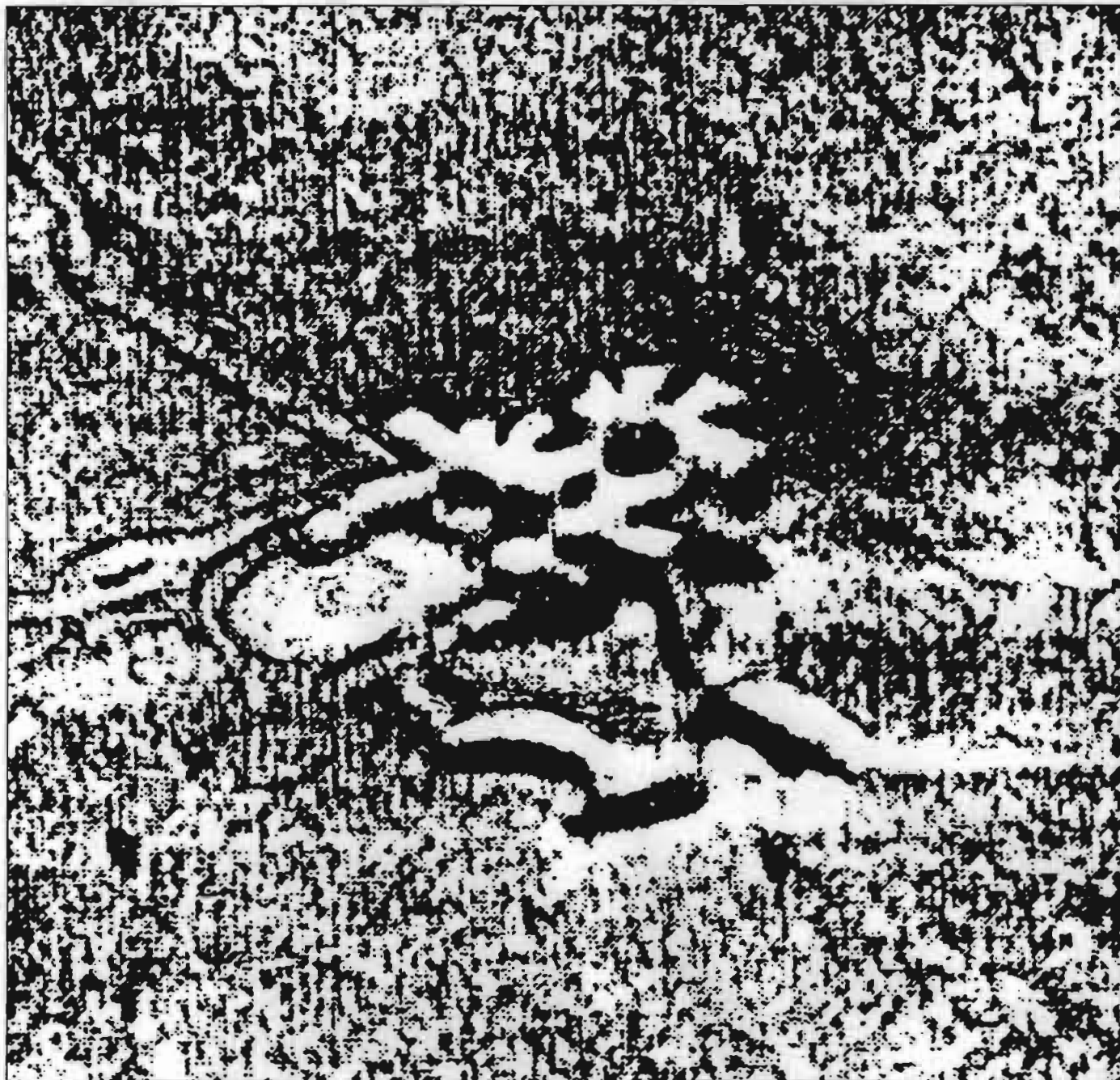
A dramatic view of Phobos with Mars in the background.

Could there be an underground base on the small Martian moonlet? Is Phobos an engineered asteroid, super-heated and then, like a glass-blower blows glass, the moon is inflated? Just who, or what, is occupying Mars and its planets?

The final picture taken by *Phobos 2* before it was 'shot out of orbit' has never been publicly released. One report indicated that it was presented at a closed meeting with US and British officials.

In the 19 October 1989 issue of *Nature*, Soviet scientists published a series of technical reports on the experiments *Phobos 2* did manage to conduct: of the thirty-seven pages, a mere three paragraphs deal with the spacecraft's loss. The report confirms that the spacecraft was spinning, either because of a computer malfunction or because *Phobos 2* was "impacted" by an unknown object.

And so we see that it is not only NASA that is apparently involved in suppressing photographs and knowledge of other planets, but the Russian space program as well.



A Space Base on Mars? A blow-up of the unusual 'installation' photographed on the Martian surface by *Phobos 2*. Note the 'bays' similar to a modern airport, and other artificial-looking features.

CHAIN CRATERS ON PHOBOS

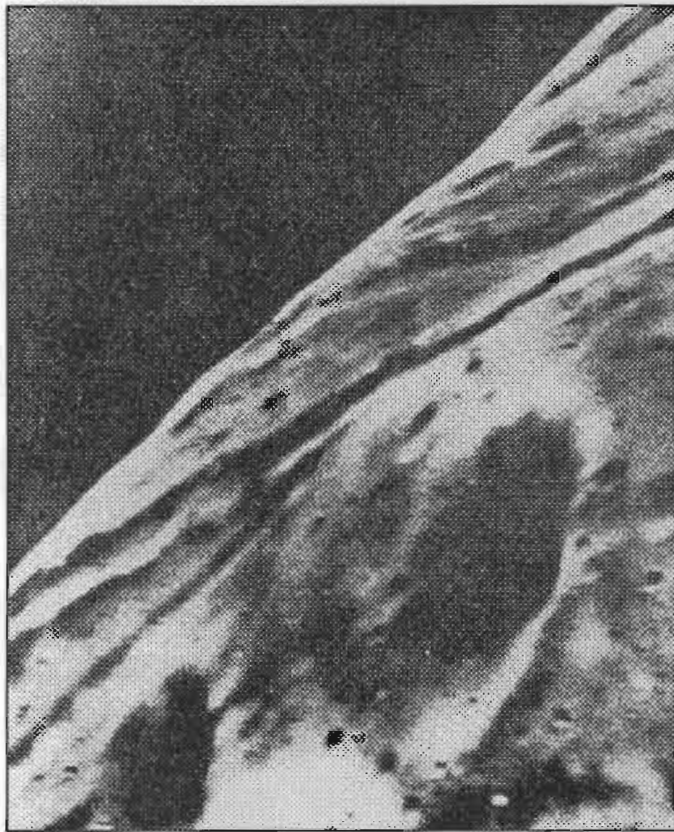
In an interesting article in the January 1977 issue of *Astronomy*, entitled "Chain Craters on Phobos", the anonymous author discusses the strange grooves and craters on Phobos:

"*Viking* has discovered another mystery in the most unexpected place—on one of the two small Martian moons. *Mariner 9*'s mapping of both Phobos (12 x 14 x 17 miles, or 20 x 23 x 28 kilometers) and Deimos (6 x 7 x 10 miles, or 10 x 12 x 16 kilometers) showed many craters, and left most investigators with the impression that they were merely rocky chunks that bore the scars of meteorite impacts. There was a puzzling feature on Phobos that a few analysts noticed but, without better data, could say little about.

"At the limit of resolution were a few small crater pits that

seemed to align in one or two chains. This was unusual, because crater chains on the moon are traditionally explained as volcanic pits—small eruption sites strung along fracture lines. Yet Phobos apparently is too small to generate heat and conventional volcanic activity.

"*Viking*'s high-resolution photos have revealed that the crater chains are real and part of an extensive system of parallel grooves, a few hundred yards wide. There may be a tendency for the grooves to lie parallel to the direction of the satellite's orbital motion, although there appear to be several swarms with somewhat different orientations. Scientists are at a loss to explain them. Theories being discussed include: grooves left by much smaller satellite debris also orbiting Mars (though the grooves seem to follow contours of Phobos' surface too closely for this to



Close-up of the Martian satellite Phobos showing peculiar regolithic markings and pock-mark cratering. (NASA photo.)

be tenable); fractures radiating from an impact crater not yet recognised (perhaps on the side of Phobos still poorly photographed); or fractures created in the body of the Martian satellite when it was part of a hypothetical larger body that spawned both Martian moons, perhaps during a catastrophic impact."

In the latest effort to photograph Mars and its moons, the NASA *Mars Observer* was launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force base in Florida in late 1992, on a 337-day voyage to Mars. The *Mars Observer* initially was expected to arrive at Mars by 19th August 1993, and enter a long, elliptical orbit over the poles. In mid-November 1993 it was to begin its two-year mapping of the surface of Mars. Then suddenly, on 22nd August 1993, it was announced that NASA had lost contact with the spacecraft.

America and the world mourned the loss of a valuable scientific tool for understanding Mars. Taxpayers wondered if there was a better way to spend their money than on expensive space probes that didn't work. A dark shield was going up on new information about Mars to the public at large...

FURTHER READING:

Mars, Robert Richardson and Chesley Bonestell (1964), Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., New York, USA.

Return To Mars, Brian Crowley and Anthony Pollock (1989), Matchbooks, Melbourne, Australia.

The McDaniel Report, Stanley V. McDaniel (1993), North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, California, USA.

Mysterious Universe: A Handbook of Astronomical Anomalies, William Corliss (1979), The Sourcebook Project, Glen Arm, Maryland, USA.